

## Minitrack Introduction - Knowledge and Innovation Management for Digitalization and Complexity

Marianne Gloet  
University of Melbourne  
[marianne.gloet@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:marianne.gloet@unimelb.edu.au)

Danny Samson  
University of Melbourne  
[d.samson@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:d.samson@unimelb.edu.au)

Knowledge and innovation management (KIM) is fundamental to creating competitive advantage in a wide range of today's complex environments. As trends such as digitalization, big data and AI continue to generate profound challenges through ever-increasing complexity, this minitrack explores the role of KIM in supporting various processes such as organizational agility, ambidexterity, knowledge sharing and collaboration to support innovation.

The focus of this minitrack supports alternative approaches to innovation and other organizational activities in complex environments involving multiple participants and stakeholders. These themes are open to exploring new methods and organizational structures for improving and accelerating innovation and raise important new issues about how knowledge is created and applied to derive business value, generate new ideas, and support innovation.

The fundamental role of knowledge in acquiring and maintaining competitive advantage emphasizes the need for effective and strategic KIM in organizations. When effective and reliable methods drive approaches to KIM, this in turn supports the integration of value-creating activities into organizational processes and increases an organization's potential to achieve innovation performance and business competitiveness.

The first paper, by Laubengaier et al. explores the influence of organizational culture on knowledge exchange and combination, based on a systematic literature review. The authors found that organizational culture is a strong predictor for successful knowledge exchange and combination. The analysis further revealed four cultural factors that were mentioned most frequently as being supportive of knowledge exchange and combination: these were risk-taking, openness, flexibility, and future orientation. Based on this comprehensive collection of supportive aspects of organizational culture, attempts of organizations to develop and change an

organizational culture towards a 'knowledge culture' can be conducted in a more effective, goal-oriented manner. This study also reveals a lack of research on how to develop, change, and sustainably establish an organizational culture that exhibits the corresponding supportive factors.

The second paper, by Ortiz de Guinea and Raymond, investigates the causal configurations of IT ambidexterity, dynamic capabilities, and environmental uncertainty that are often associated with service innovation performance in SMEs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are paramount for the economy; for instance, in the European Union and the U.S., they represent around 99% of all firms and account for more than 60% of all jobs. Despite their importance, the strategic literature on these types of firms is scarce when compared to that of larger firms. Nowadays, in the case of SMEs, their competitiveness in a global economy that has become knowledge-based (instead of product-based) is mostly determined by their innovation performance in general, and by their service innovation performance in particular. Undertaking a qualitative comparative analysis of over sixty industrial service SMEs, the authors found that these firms attain service innovation performance when they dispose of an IT capability for exploration, accompanied by an IT capability for exploitation in one configuration, whereas the IT capability for exploitation is absent in other configurations.

Finally, the paper by Gloet and Samson investigates the ways in which knowledge management (KM) contributes to sustainability and stakeholder collaboration across a number of small to medium size Australian food and beverage exporters. A growing focus on sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) in global supply chains offers opportunities for organizations to create value and secure competitive advantage by employing strategic KM practices to support SSCM. Analysis of eight case study organizations revealed that KM contributes to

SSCM across a number of areas, including strategic focus, protecting firm reputation and performance, risk management, innovation, collaboration and relationships with partners. This exploratory research indicates that there is considerable potential for KM to contribute to value and competitive advantage through supporting various SSCM practices. Overall there is a lack of substantive research in this area, and so further studies across larger samples and different types of supply chains may shed further light on the ways in which the management of knowledge can add value to SSCM.